74

Innocentius etc. dilectis filiis magnatibus et baronibus Anglie salutem et apostolicam benedictionem.

GRAVE GERIMUS ET molestum quod sicut accepimus inter karissimum in Christo filium nostrum I. regem Anglorum illustrem et quosdam vestrum propter questiones noviter suscitatas dissensio est suborta grave dispendium paritura nisi celeriter [a] fuerint prudenti consilio ac studio diligenti sopite.[1] Illud autem reprobamus omnino si quemadmodum a multis asseritur conspirationes aut coniuraciones feceritis ausu temerario contra ipsum, quodque cum armis irreverenter et indevote repetere presumpsistis [2] que cum humilitate ac devocione[b] si opus esset vos repetere debebatis. Ne igitur ipsius bonum propositum [3] huiusmodi occasionibus valeat impediri, nos omnes conspiraciones et coniuraciones presumptas a tempore suborte discordie inter regnum et sacerdotium apostolica denunciamus auctoritate cassatas et per excommunicacionis sentenciam inhibemus ne talia de cetero presumantur, vos monendo prudenter et efficaciter inducendo ut per manifesta devocionis et humilitatis indicia ipsum regem vobis placare ac reconciliare curetis, exhibentes ei servicia consueta que vos et predecessores vestri sibi et suis predecessoribus impendistis.[c 4] Ac deinde, si quid ab eo duxeritis

Pott. 4960. *Texts.* P (12 and 13) : P.R.O., Patent rolls 12 and 13 (16 John) m. 1*d* ; whence (inaccurately) *Foedera*, I. i. 127. Passages obliterated in P 12 are supplied from the duplicate, P 13.

[a] sceleriter P (12 and 13)
[b] ac devocione (cf. no. 75) ; ad devocionem P (12 and 13)
[c] impendistis, *oblit.* P (12) ; impedistis P (13)

[1] At a great council held 6 January 1215, dissatisfied magnates had asked the king to confirm the coronation-charter of Henry I and the laws of King Edward (Coventry, ii. 218). The king had deferred answer until 26 April, and sent meanwhile to Rome, complaining of the action of the magnates (*R.L.P.*, p. 126*b*). The baronial party also sent to Rome certain

74

Innocent etc. to his beloved sons, the magnates and barons of England, greeting and apostolic benediction.

IT IS A GRIEVOUS trouble to us that, as we have heard, a difference between some of you and our well-beloved son in Christ, John, illustrious king of the English, has arisen over certain matters recently in dispute—a difference which will cause serious loss, unless the matters are quickly settled by wise counsel and earnest attention.[1] We utterly condemn it, if (as alleged by many) you have dared to form leagues or conspiracies against him and presumed arrogantly and disloyally by force of arms to make claims [2] which, if necessary, you ought to have made in humility and loyal devotion. Lest, therefore, the king's good intention [3] should be thwarted for reasons of this kind, by apostolic authority we denounce as null and void all leagues and conspiracies set on foot since the outbreak of dissension between the kingdom and the priesthood, and under sentence of excommunication we forbid the hatching of such plots in future—prudently admonishing and strongly urging you to appease and reconcile the king by manifest proofs of your loyalty and submission, rendering him the customary services which you and your predecessors paid to him and his predecessors ; [4] and then, if you should decide to make a demand of him,

envoys who arrived 28 February 1215. A letter from Walter Mauclerc, a royal envoy to the Curia, describes the position there early in March (*Foedera*, I. i. 120).

[2] The magnates had come armed to the council in January ('in lascivo satis apparatu militari,' Wendover, in Paris, ii. 584).

[3] 'The king's good intention' almost certainly refers to his proposal to go on Crusade. cf. similar references in nos. 19, 77, 78.

[4] King John had complained to the pope about the resistance of certain barons to feudal military service overseas in 1213 and 1214 (cf. Powicke, *Loss*, pp. 316 *sqq.*, and *Stephen Langton*, p. 118 ; Painter, *Reign of King John*, pp. 212-14, 280, 285). See further, no. 77 below.

postulandum, non insolenter sed cum reverencia imploretis, regalem ei conservantes honorem ut sic quod intenderitis valeatis facilius optinere. Nos autem eundem regem per scripta nostra rogamus et obsecramus in domino, in remissionem ei peccaminum iniungentes, ut vos benigne pertractet et iustas peticiones vestras clementer admittat,[5] ut et vos ipsi congaudendo noscatis eum, divina gratia faciente, in meliorem statum esse mutatum, ac per hoc vos et heredes vestri sibi et successoribus suis debeatis prompcius et devocius famulari. Quocirca nobilitatem vestram rogandam duximus et monendam, per apostolica vobis scripta mandantes, quatinus tales in hoc vos exhibere curetis quod regnum Anglie optata pace letetur et nos in necessitatibus vestris, cum opus fuerit, necessarium vobis impendere debeamus auxilium et favorem.[6]

Dat' Laterani, xiiii kal. Aprilis pontificatus nostri anno octavodecimo.

you are to implore it respectfully and not arrogantly, maintaining his royal honour, so that you may the more easily gain your object. We are asking the king in our letter, and praying him in God's name, and enjoining it on him as he hopes to have his sins remitted, to treat you kindly and to hear your just petitions[5] graciously, so that you too may know with rejoicing that, through divine grace, he has had a change of heart—in virtue of which you and your heirs ought to serve him and his successors with more willingness and devotion. Wherefore, we have thought fit to request and counsel you, and by apostolic letter to order, that you should be careful so to behave in this matter that the kingdom of England may rejoice in the peace it desires, and that we may grant you in your necessities (if occasion arise) the necessary help and favour.[6]

The Lateran, the 19th of March, in the eighteenth year of our Pontificate.

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[5] The pope's letter addressed to King John does not survive: the king may have seen no reason to preserve it, whereas the letters which his envoys had obtained, addressed to the barons and to the bishops (no. 75 below), were favourable to him and were copied (probably between 20 and 27 May 1215) on to the dorse of the patent roll.

[6] We do not know when this letter reached the addressees—scarcely before the end of April or early May (Coventry, ii. 219). It must have convinced the baronial party that there was no hope of support for them from Rome and may have precipitated the rejection of John's offer, made on 9 May 1215, to submit the dispute to arbitrators under the presidency of the pope (*Foedera*, I. i. 128).